MOON of DELIGHT

by Margaret Bell Houston

Chapter 33

A NOTE FROM MOLLY

All that she could lose was lost, Juanita reflected. The burden that remained—faintness and foreboding, the black night, terror, love and heartache—the river would devour it all. Brown, sluggish waters that never told their secrets.

Juanita started, opened her eyes. GGabreau, who had often sat beside her bed as she lay ill, had drawn closer to her, was speaking more softly than before.

"I know some'p'n else," and as Juanita looked at him, "Meester Stanard come to de Tijon—many time. He telephone, too. One day when he come I am in de lobby, wipin' de tiles. He ask where you are and dey tell him you and de marquesa have go away. He say 'Where?' Dey tell him dey not know, but mebby you will coome beck in lit' while. Dey say dey will tell you he call—when you come. He say, 'Let me know instead dat she is here.' He turn 'round, and look at me and say in low voice, 'Do you know where she is?' Now why he ask me dat?"

"I don't know, Gabreau. Perhaps you looked as if you knew."

Gabreau looked hurt. "I nevair look like dat way."

"What did you say?" she asked.

"I shek my head, and he go away. I am fool, yes, but all day I am sorry I shek my head."

"Gabreau!" Juanita half rose. "You wouldn't tell him where I am!"

"No. De marquesa here too. I not even tell dat. But I am sorry I shek my head. He look so worry and he come so mooch. . . He love you, Juanita? Yes? . . . ." And as Juanita turned her face away to hide the tears, "I know he love yoou. An' you love him. You cry his name when de fever burn you. You say too you will go police station and give yo' seff up. You say mooch things, Juanita—but most you cry his name. An' so I know you love him. Dat is mebby why I am sorry I shek my head. I wish mebbe he would find you, and tek you 'way."

"He must never find me here."

"Why? Eef you are here he cannot find you somewheres else. . . ."

"He would not understand, Gabreau. I know what he believes of women in places like this. I know what he would believe of me."

Gabreau nodded. "I know. Like Pifi. But me, I know when I see you. I not know sooch womens like you was in the worl'. I have only know like Pifi. But I know you when I see you."

"Dear Gabreau!" she said, and laid her hand on his. "But there are other reasons, too. I must never see him again, and since I have gone out of his life, I'd rather go without his knowing—this."

It had grown dark in the room. Gabreau, with her hand on his, did not stir. His eyes were closed, yet light seemed all around him, a strange and holy flame enfolding him. Her hand left his, yet still he seemed to feel it there. Always he would feel it there. . .

He wondered if she still wept. She wept so silently, not like Conchita's weeping. Presently her voice came.

"I'm going down tonight, Gabreau. I'll have to dress."

"You—go down?"

"Yes. Molly's note. I'm better now. And I want to see Molly."

When he had gone Juanita rose, getting slowly into the black costume with its spangled veil. Slowly she went down the stair, wondering what Molly had to tell her. The parlor doors were just opening. There was time to go in and see Molly now. Conchita came out as Juanita knocked on Molly's door. Juanita saw Divitt sitting in the dim room beside Molly's bed. He looked up and, seeing Juanita, made a dismissing gesture, shook his head.

"She too sick now," Conchita whispered. "Tomorrow, mebbe."

Juanita went into the parlors. Not many were there. The crowd was not the same. She and Gabreau were like ghosts revisiting a changed scene. At ten o'clock Conchita appeared in the parlor door, signaled to Juanita.

"Molly. She ask for you again." Conchita was sobbing as they went through the court. "Many time she have ask fer you. Divitt say no. But now—anything she say."

Divitt stood by the window, his back to the bed. Molly lay white and small on the great pillow. Her eyes were closed. Conchita went to her side.

"Juanita have come, bebby. . ."

Conchita's caressing words . . . A faint movement of Molly's eyelids.

Juanita drew nearer the bed as Conchita beckoned and made room for her at Molly's side.

Juanita bent over the bed. "Molly," she whispered.

Molly's blue eyes opened slowly. Something like a smile vanished from her face. She tried to lift her head. Her lips moved.

Molly lifted a hand, pointed. Conchita and Jaunita looked questioningly around the room.

Jaunita leaned closer. "What is it, Molly?"

Such trouble in the great blue eyes. Molly pointed to the old bureau. Juanita glanced about. Conchita touched a drawer. Molly shook her head. Conchita touched the second drawer. The third. Molly smiled.

Conchita opened the third drawer. A white silk shawl, embroidered in whiter roses. Conchita took the shawl out, held it up that Molly might see.

But Molly did not see.

* * *

Rain falling in the court. Rain all day, all night. Breaking clouds. A filter of sunlight. More rain.

Somehow the parlors went on. Still Juanita, veiled and silent, moved about in the changed crowd. The little note from Molly—Molly's last message to her—had begged that she return. Molly had wanted to say more but all she had had time to convey was her wish about the shawl. Conchita knew already what Molly wanted with the shawl, having heard her say. But apparently Molly desired that Juanita should know too. Together they had folded it about her as she lay asleep, Molly looking all seraph at the last.

Juanita knew now that she would stay until the end, since Molly had wished it. But the end was not far. There was a new chief of police. Places like Divitt's were being closed daily under his regime. This would not happen to Divitt's unless it happened soon.

The parlors would die of themselves, now that Molly was gone. Divitt's heart was not in them. He had come in but once in the five days since Molly died. If they revived it would be in the form of Divitt's Dive. Divitt would not need her—Juanita—then.

He had said nothing about her going again with the marquesa. Now that he knew she was aware of the role in which he had cast her, he had said no more. Release would come to her in some way before long. Divitt, if she knew him well, would pay her for her services in the parlors. She would go far away, even as Kirk thought already that she had gone.

Rain falling all day, all night. A filter of star light. More rain.

The marquesa sat in her room, listening to its drone on the balcony, its drip from the eaves. Divitt would not let her go down into the parlors. Divitt would not let her go out into the town. She and

(Continued on Page 12)

ACROSS

1. Give
7. Mohammedan nobles
13. Accomplished public speaker
14. Satirical poem
15. Kill
16. Small pavilion
18. Vessel for water travel
20. Long fish
21. Insects
22. Three: prefix
24. In case that
25. Center of the solar system
26. King of Judea at the time of Christ's birth
28. At home
29. Mentally unbalanced: slang
31. Footlike part
32. Feminine name
34. Charles Lamb's pen name
35. Substance used in building roads
36. Adheres closely
37. Malicious firing of property
39. Stinging insects
40. Fairy
42. Undermine
43. Places
46. Level surface
47. Male child
48. Silly creatures
49. That is: abbr.
50. Presiding officer's mallet
52. Contemptible person
53. Comparative ending
54. Incline the head
56. Ship which defeated the Merrimac
58. Devoured
59. Mast
61. Title of address
62. Fall to hit
63. Egg dish
65. Ridicule
67. Want
68. Mercantile establishments

DOWN

1. Sad
2. Pertaining to the mouth
3. Negative vote
4. Occupying the exact position of
5. Sign
6. Great Lake
7. Passageways
8. Manufacturer
9. Type measure
10. Flaw back
11. Tumultuous disorder
12. Frightening
15. French river
17. Not the same
19. Prongs
21. Purchase
22. Makes dirty
25. Gazing fixedly
27. Fell in drops
30. Pope's triple crown
31. Cooking vessel
33. Follow
35. Front of the foot
36. Head covering
38. Water vapor
39. Pale and sickly looking
40. Rotates rapidly
41. Abdominal limb of a crustacean
42. Not hollow
44. African flies
45. Withers
47. Upper house of Congress
48. Pikelike fish
51. A bone of the skull
52. Celestial visitor
55. Matron
57. Urchins
58. Military assistant
60. Thing
62. Russian village community
64. Fifty-one
66. Artifical language

Solution of Yesterday's Puzzle

A	C	E			S	P	I	E	S			E	R	E
D	A	D			P	I	N	T	O			L	A	G
O	R	I	G	I	N			A	I	D	I	N	G
			B	E	N	T			L	A	C			
R	O	L	E	S			I	T			M	I	C	E
A	P	E	S			S	N	E	E			T	A	N
B	E			E	S	T	U	A	R	Y		U	T	
A	R	T			O	A	R	S			E	A	S	E
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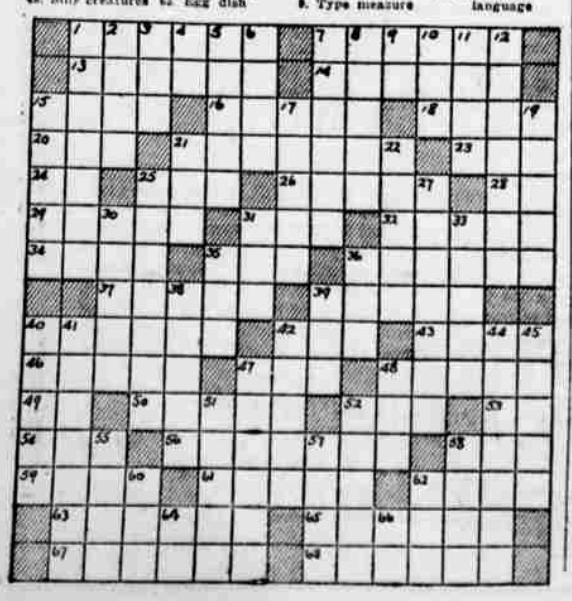
R	E	C	E	D	E			L	I	T	E	R	S	
A	L	E			A	R	O	S	E			N	E	O
M	A	D			M	A	N	E	S			D	E	W



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE

THE REPORT

REG'LAR FELLERS

A SHORT ANSWER

THE GUMPS

ONE MOMENT, PLEASE

BRINGING UP FATHER

MUTT AND JEFF

A PLAYGROUNDS FOR A BARBER'S PICNIC

TAILSPIN TOMMY

By Glenn Chaffin and Hal Forrest

SPEED STILL IN GOOD STANDING!